THE VELIIDAE (HETEROPTERA) OF AMERICA NORTH OF MEXICO—KEYS AND CHECK LIST

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Abstract.—Keys, supplemented with scanning electron micrographs and drawings, are presented for the five genera and 35 species of Veliidae of North America north of Mexico. Distributions and synonymies are given in a check list. A selected bibliography pertaining to these taxa is included.

Although the veliids are by far the most abundant of the surface-inhabiting Heteroptera and second only to the Gerridae in species diversity, they are usually ignored by the average collector and are poorly represented in most collections. This relative obscurity is due primarily to their small size (1–12 mm) and their penchant for living in cryptic habitats. Only the Rhagoveliinae are found on open stretches of water—Rhagovelia below the ripples and eddies of streams and Trochopus along shorelines of tropical bays and estuaries. The microveline genus Husseyella shares the marine habitat with Trochopus and inhabits the margins of salt marshes and similar niches. In general, Microvelia are found on or near the margins of practically all still waters—ponds, lakes, temporary puddles, and the quieter portions of streams and rivers, where they secrete themselves among the debris, venturing out onto the open water rarely. Unlike the Rhagoveliinae, members of this genus are not totally restricted to the water surface and are commonly found running over nearby rocks and mud flats. Even though individuals of the veliine genus Paravelia (= Velia of authors) are the largest of the North American veliids, they are less often encountered because they do not usually inhabit the water surface, but are often found, instead, on emergent vegetation, and occasionally on vegetation some distance from water.

There are comparatively few veliid species in North America: Five genera with 35 included species. Of these, only the genus *Rhagovelia* has been adequately monographed (Bacon, 1956). The key to *Rhagovelia* presented here has been adapted, in part, from his paper.

The Western Hemisphere *Microvelia* were reviewed by Torre-Bueno (1924a) and later revised by McKinstry (1933, unpublished). Torre-Bueno's paper encompassed only 22 of the currently valid 81 New World species. In addition to Torre-Bueno's key several regional keys to *Microvelia* have since been published (Bobb, 1974; Froeschner, 1962; Herring, 1950; Usinger, 1956; Wilson, 1958). Usinger's 1956 key to the *Microvelia* of California was largely based on McKinstry's unpublished work. A check list compiled by

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Drake and Hussey (1955) is the most recent synoptic work on the genus. Smith has a monographic revision of the North and Central American Microvelia in progress, but since it will be some time before the results are published, the key presented here will hopefully suffice as an identification aid in the interim. The subgenera Microvelia (Microvelia) and M. (Kirkaldya) are separated by the vertically oriented, leaf-like, dorsal arolium found only in the latter. This arolium is often difficult to see, so it is not used as a character in the key. Because no consistent characters have yet been found for successfully separating alate individuals of Microvelia sensu lato or females of the subgenus Kirkaldya, the key is based primarily on apterous specimens and males of Kirkaldya species. However, this should result in only minimal inconvenience because the majority of specimens within most populations are apterous and males are present. The elimination of winged forms from the key has necessitated the omission of one species, M. marginata Uhler. This species is known in the U.S. only from a single alate specimen from Key West, Florida. M. marginata is prevalent throughout the Caribbean area, and this single U.S. record is probably based on a hurricane transported specimen. A similar occurrence following a tropical storm has been verified by Herring (1958) for M. cubana (= M. portoricensis sensu Herring, not Drake). The latter species quite possibly has adapted to and become established in southern Florida based on several collection records subsequent to Herring's original observation.

Other than basic descriptive work and a few extremely localized regional keys, the genus *Paravelia* has, until recently, been ignored. Members of this New World genus were considered congeneric with the Old World genus *Velia* until Polhemus (1976) revised their status. Generic concepts, distributions, and synonymies were reviewed by Polhemus but no compre-

hensive keys exist for the genus.

Key to the Genera of Veliidae of America North of Mexico

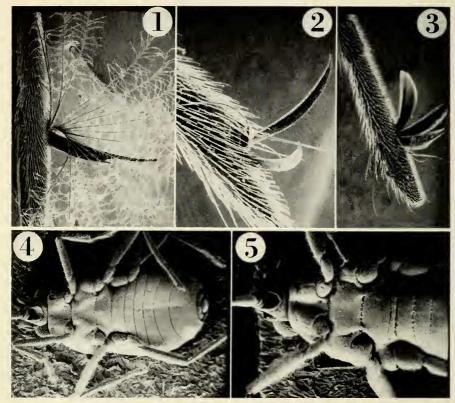
- 1. Middle tarsi deeply cleft, with leaflike claws and plumose hairs arising from base of cleft (Fig. 1). Rhagoveliinae
- Middle tarsi not deeply cleft and without plumose hairs arising from base of cleft
- 2. Hind tarsi 2-segmented, the basal segment very short. Apterous.

 Tropical America. Marine

 [One species, T. plumbeus (Uhler)]
- Hind tarsi 3-segmented, the basal segment very short. Apterous or macropterous. Cosmopolitan. Riffles of streams and rivers or (rarely) lakes

 Rhagovelia Mayr
- 3. Tarsal formula 1:2:2. Microveliinae

Tarsal formula 3:3:3. Veliinae Paravelia Breddin



Figs. 1-3. Tarsi. 1. Rhagovelia obesa $(61\times)$; 2. Microvelia americana $(293\times)$; 3. Husseyella turmalis $(117\times)$. Figs. 4-5. Ventral view of female Microvelia $(31\times)$. 4. M. pulchella; 5. M. americana.

4. Middle tarsi with 4 leaflike blades arising from cleft (Fig. 3)

**Husseyella Herring [One species, II. turmalis (Drake and Harris)]

Middle tarsi with narrow claws arising from cleft (Fig. 2)
 Microvelia Westwood

Key to Apterous *Microvelia* of America North of Mexico [Except for species keyed in couplets 8 through 13, all species belong to the subgenus *Microvelia* (*Microvelia*).]

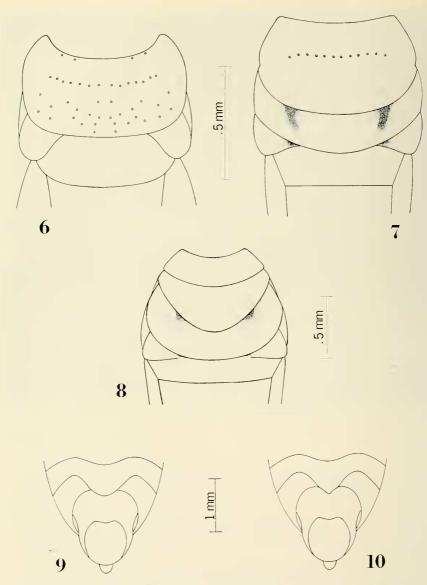
1. Pronotum covering entire thorax to metathoracic triangles, dorsal surface of thorax appearing 1-segmented (Fig. 6)

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- Pronotum not covering entire thorax, at least 1 other thoracic segment exposed (Figs. 7, 8)

| 2. | Process, see San Market Process, see San | |
|----|--|------|
| | terga visible atrata Torre-Bu | eno |
| - | Minute, white, vestigial wing pads absent; 7 entire abdominal terga | |
| | visible | 3 |
| 3. | Blue to gray pruinose patches present on abdominal terga 2 and | |
| | 3, and, usually, 6 and 7; orange-brown to dark reddish-brown | |
| | species | 4 |
| - | Blue to gray pruinose patches absent on all abdominal terga; color | |
| | uniform sooty black (except orange transverse band across anterior | |
| | lobe of pronotum) | 5 |
| 4. | | |
| | of hairs equal in length to width of hind femur; 2nd genital seg- | |
| | ment of male without laterally directed caudal spines | |
| | fontinalis Torre-Bu | eno |
| - | Dorsum with only short pubescence, closely appressed to body; | |
| | 2nd genital segment of male with a pair of short laterally projecting | |
| _ | caudal spines cerifera McKins | stry |
| 5. | Distal segment of middle tarsi 20% longer than proximal segment; | |
| | coxae dark brown; females with glabrous depressed area on lateral | |
| | margin of pronotum glabrosulcata Polher | nus |
| - | Distal segment of middle tarsi subequal to proximal segment; coxae | |
| | yellowish; female lacking glabrous depressed area on lateral margin | |
| c | of pronotum austrina Torre-Bue | eno |
| 6. | Pronotum short; dorsal surface of thorax apparently consisting of 3 | ~ |
| | segments (Fig. 8) Pronotum longer; dorsal surface apparently 2-segmented (Fig. | 7 |
| _ | | 1.4 |
| _ | | 14 |
| 7. | Hind tibiae of males curved; females with wide groove between | |
| | front coxae for reception of rostrum, interior edges sloped grad- | |
| | ually, divergent posteriorly (Fig. 4); front coxae widely separated; | |
| | length normally less than 2 mm (1.25–2.25 mm) pulchella Westwo | od |
| - | Hind tibiae of males straight; females with narrow groove, barely | |
| | wider than rostrum, interior edges more vertical, parallel (Fig. | |
| | 5); front coxae close together; length greater than 2 mm (2.00– | |
| | 3.75 mm) (subgenus Kirkaldya—key for males only) | 8 |
| 8. | Distal ventral margin of 1st genital segment glabrous or with only | |
| | very short pubescence (Figs. 11–14) | 9 |
| - | Distal ventral margin of 1st genital segment with either a row or | |
| | tufts of long hairs (Figs. 15–19) (note that the tuft of hairs on M . | |
| | americana may occasionally be shortened and, thereby, obscured) | 10 |
| 9. | Distal ventral margin of 1st genital segment with a triangular | |
| | glabrous area (Fig. 11) torquata Champ | ion |



Figs. 6–8. Dorsal thoracic segments—Microvelia. 6. M. fontinalis; 7. M. signata; 8. M. americana. Figs. 9–10. Terminal ventral abdominal segments—Paravelia. 9. P. summersi; 10. P. alvaradana.

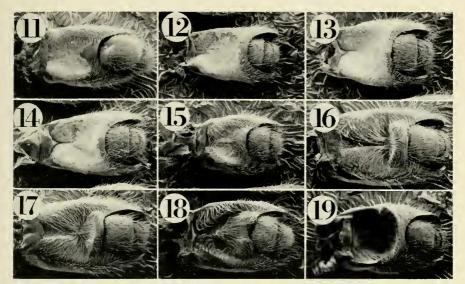
 Posterior ventral margin of 1st genital segment with only a narrow, transverse, glabrous area (Figs. 12–14)
 paludicola Champion

11

10. Hairs on ventral surface of 1st genital segment arranged in 2 fairly distinct lateral tufts (Figs. 18, 19)

15

16



Figs. 11–19. Microvelia (Kirkaldya) male genital capsules (56×). 11. M. torquata; 12. M. paludicola—Miss.; M. paludicola—Ga.; 14. M. paludicola—Tex.; 15. M. americana; 16. M. gerhardi; 17. M. californiensis; 18. M. beameri; 19. M. fasciculifera.

- Hairs on ventral surface of 1st genital segment aligned in a continuous pattern (Figs. 15–17)
- 11. Venter of last abdominal segment with a short erect tubercle fasciculifera McKinstry
- Venter of last abdominal segment without tubercle beameri McKinstry
- 12. Distal ventral margin of 1st genital segment with a raised transverse ridge (Figs. 16, 17)
 - Distal ventral margin of 1st genital segment without a raised transverse ridge (Fig. 15)

 americana (Uhler)
- 13. Middle of front femora distinctly swollen and blackened; inner surface of front femora flattened gerhardi Hussey
- Middle of front femora not swollen and blackened; inner surface not flattened californiensis McKinstry
- 14. Antennal segment IV subequal (90%+) to width of head through eyes; middle ½ of 2nd abdominal tergum with darkened area; males with large acute tubercle on 2nd abdominal sternum albonotata Champion
 - Antennal segment IV not longer than 75% of width of head through eyes; 2nd abdominal tergum without darkened area; males without ventral tubercle
- 15. Last 3 abdominal terga with broad shining areas, covering 25–90% of at least 1 segment

- Last 3 abdominal terga with at most a thin, shiny, medial line present on last 2 segments (width of line, at most, 10% of maximum width of segment)
- 16. Silvery pubescence present on head around eyes and base of antennae, and shoulders of pronotum buenoi Drake
 - Silvery pubescence absent on head around eyes and base of antennae, and shoulders of pronotum signata Uhler
- 17. Tibia of mesothoracic leg subequal in length (90%+) to width of head through eyes cubana Drake
 - Tibia of mesothoracic leg less than 75% as long as width of head through eyes
 hinei Drake

Key to *Parvelia* of America North of Mexico (= *Velia* of American Authors)

1. Body slender; genital segments of both sexes acuminate; wing pads or wings basally brown, without white markings

stagnalis (Burmeister)

9.

3

4

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- Body robust; genital segments button-like (♀) or forming a blunt angulate projection (♂) but not acuminate; wing pads or basal wing spot white, conspicuous
- 2. Collar projecting, angulate behind eyes; pronotum not set off from collar by conspicuous row of pits beameri (Hungerford)
- Collar not projecting, not angulate behind eyes; pronotum set off from collar by a more or less conspicuous row of pits
- 3. First antennal segment approximately $1.25\times$ as long as width of head through eyes, and $1.5\times$ as long as 2nd antennal segment (southeastern U.S.) brachialis (Stål)
- First antennal segment approximately 1.5× as long as width of head through eyes, and 2× as long as 2nd antennal segment (southwestern U.S.)
- 4. Ventral projection of 7th abdominal sternum blunt (Fig. 9)

 **summersi* (Drake)
- Ventral projection of 7th abdominal sternum acuminate (Fig. 10)
 alvaradana (Drake and Hottes)

Key to Rhagovelia of America North of Mexico

- 1. Genital segments in both sexes mucronate; female connexiva produced caudad from 7th tergum as long mucronate processes

 becki Drake and Harris
- Genital segments bluntly rounded or triangular but not mucronate; female connexiva not produced caudad as long mucronate processes
- 2. Female midfemur transversely constricted at middle; males with-

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|----------------------|---|--|
| | out median shining areas on dorsum of abdominal segments | |
| | choreutes Hussey | |
| | · | |
| - | Female midfemur may be dorsoventrally flattened but not trans- | |
| | versely constricted at middle; males with at least 7th (last) abdominal | |
| | segment having median dorsal shining area 3 | |
| 3. | Female midfemur dorsoventrally flattened; connexiva reflexed for | |
| | the last 4 segments. Males with dorsal median shining areas on at | |
| | least the last 3 abdominal segments; if shining areas are small, | |
| | | |
| | 7 | |
| - | Female midfemur not flattened; abdomen tapering evenly to apex, | |
| | connexiva not reflexed. Males with dorsal median shining areas on | |
| | only abdominal segment 7; posterior femora greatly incrassate 4 | |
| 4. | Venter of abdomen orange brown over at least last 3 segments, | |
| | thickly dotted with minute black conical setae. Males with abdominal | |
| | venter carinate over 1st 3 segments varipes Champion | |
| | Venter of abdomen blackish grey over all but 7th segment, without | |
| - | | |
| | evident minute black setae. Male abdominal venter not carinate | |
| | torreyana Drake and Hussey | |
| 5. | Apterous female with apex of pronotum continued into a long, ele- | |
| | vated process. Apterous male pronotum triangular, its apex extend- | |
| | ing over metanotum, mesonotum exposed at sides oriander Parshley | |
| _ | Apterous female with pronotum not produced at apex. Pronotum | |
| | of apterous male not extending over metanotum | |
| 0 | | |
| 6. | Connexiva of apterous female diverging over apex of last abdominal | |
| | segment, apex of connexiva rounded as seen from side. Venter of | |
| | last abdominal segment of male flattened medially with prominent | |
| | hairy ridges at each side distincta Champion | |
| _ | Connexiva of apterous female close together or meeting at apex; | |
| | apex of connexiva forming at least a 90° angle as seen from side. | |
| | Male venter not flattened and without hairy ridges on 7th seg- | |
| | ment 7 | |
| _ | | |
| 7. | Abdominal dorsum of apterous male with only traces of median | |
| | shining areas on a few segments in addition to segment 7. Meso- | |
| | notum of apterous female tumid rivale Torre-Bueno | |
| _ | Abdominal dorsum of apterous male and dorsum of metanotum with | |
| | broad median shining areas; posterior trochanter of male armed | |
| | with several small teeth. Mesonotum of apterous female tumid | |
| | only at sides or not tumid 8 | |
| 0 | | |
| 8. | | |
| | exposed portion of mesonotum longer than exposed portion of | |
| | metanotum obesa Uhler | |
| - | Connexival margins of apterous female with 1st 2 segments straight; | |
| | exposed portion of mesonotum shorter than exposed portion of | |
| | metanotum knighti Drake and Harris | |
| | G. 62 | |

Check List—Veliidae of America North of Mexico Genus *Husseyella* Herring 1955

turmalis (Drake and Harris) 1933

Southern Florida, Mexico, Caribbean, Middle America

Genus Microvelia Westwood 1834

albonotata Champion 1898 Canada, U.S. east of

Rocky Mts., Mexico to Peru, Caribbean

americana (Uhler) 1884 Eastern U.S., west to

Nebraska and Texas

atrata Torre-Bueno 1916 Georgia and Florida,

west to Louisiana

austrina Torre-Bueno 1924a Southeastern U.S.,

parallela Blatchley 1925 Mexico

beameri McKinstry 1937 Southwestern U.S.,

Northern Mexico,

Jamaica

buenoi Drake 1920a Northern half of U.S.,

California, Canada, Alaska,

(Florida?)

californiensis McKinstry 1937 California, Oregon,

Baja California

cerifera McKinstry 1937 Iowa, Kansas, Nebraska,

Colorado, New Mexico, Utah, Arizona, Nevada,

California

cubana Drake 1951a Southern Florida, Cuba,

Dominican Republic

fasciculifera McKinstry 1937 Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, Mexico

Alizona, Mexico

fontinalis Torre-Bueno 1916 U.S. east of Mississippi

River

gerhardi Hussey 1924 Western U.S., americana Uhler 1895 Northern Mexico

glabrosulcata Polhemus 1974 Arizona, Mexico

hinei Drake 1920b Canada to Argentina

marginata Uhler 1893

pudoris Drake and Harris 1936

paludicola Champion 1898

alachuana Hussey and Herring 1950

pulchella Westwood 1834

capitata Guérin-Meneville 1857

borealis Torre-Bueno 1916

incerta Kirby 1890 robusta Uhler 1894

signata Uhler 1894b

oreades Drake and Harris 1928

setipes Champion 1898

torquata Champion 1898

Southern Florida,

Caribbean, Mexico,

Panama, Venezuela, Peru

Southeastern U.S.,

Kentucky, Tennessee,

Arkansas, Oklahoma, Kansas, Texas, New

Mexico, Mexico,

Middle America, Caribbean

Canada to Argentina,

Caribbean

Southwestern U.S., Mexico, Middle America

Southwestern U.S., Mexico, Middle America

Genus Paravelia Breddin 1898

alvaradana (Drake and Hottes) 1952

beameri (Hungerford) 1929

brachialis (Stål) 1860

australis (Torre-Bueno) 1916

stagnalis (Uhler) 1894

(nec. Burmeister)

stagnalis (Burmeister) 1835

paulineae (Wilson) 1953

watsoni (Drake) 1919

summersi (Drake) 1951b

Northwestern Mexico

(Arizona?)

Arizona

Southeastern U.S.,

Oklahoma, Texas,

Mexico, to (?) Argentina,

Caribbean

Eastern U.S., Cuba

Arizona

Genus Rhagovelia Mayr 1865

becki Drake and Harris 1936

choreutes Hussey 1925

distincta Champion 1898

excellentis Drake and Harris 1927

mexicana Signoret 1877 (nomen nudum)

Texas, Nevada, Mexico

Southeastern U.S. to New

Mexico, California

Western U.S., Mexico,

Middle America

- d. arizonensis Gould 1931
- d. cadyi Gould 1931
- d. harmonia Gould 1931
- d. modesta Gould 1931
- d. proxima Gould 1931
- d. valentina Gould 1931

knighti Drake and Harris 1927

obesa Uhler 1871 arctoa Torre-Bueno 1924b flavicincta Torre-Bueno 1924b oriander Parshley 1922 rivale Torre-Bueno 1924b

torreyana Drake and Hussey 1957 varipes Champion 1898 beameri Gould 1931 Arkansas, Missouri, Oklahoma Eastern U.S., Southeastern Canada

Midwestern U.S. Colorado, Kansas, Iowa, Missouri, Oklahoma, Nebraska, Texas Western Florida Arizona, New Mexico, Mexico

Genus Trochopus Carpenter 1898

plumbeus (Uhler) 1894a marinus Carpenter 1898 Florida (Gulf and Atlantic Coasts), Caribbean, Atlantic coasts of Mexico, Middle America and Northern South America

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